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VALUABLE SECRETS,

RELATIVE TO

GARDENING

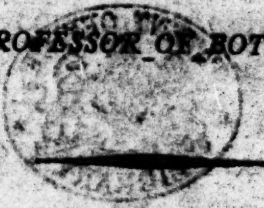
AND

AGRICULTURE,

NOW MADE KNOWN,

By JEDEDIAH SIMMONS,

PROFESSOR OF BOTANY.



London :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY J. BARFIELD,
NO. 385, OXFORD-STREET.

1795.



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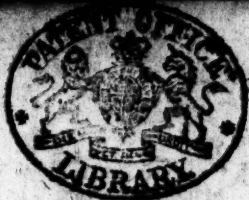


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Preliminary Observation.

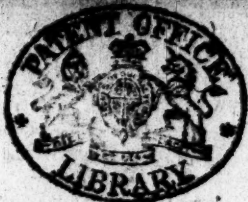
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FIVE Shillings may be thought an extravagant price for this little book: and so it certainly would be, if considered only as a pamphlet, but that is not the right light to view it in. The five shillings are paid for the communication of TWENTY VALUABLE SECRETS: and the printing them in a little pamphlet, is deemed the easiest and best way of communicating those secrets. In this view, the price is a very trifle, and indeed might justly have been fixed at a guinea subscription, but it is thought best to set the price so low, that the benefit may be more universally extended.



Preliminary Observations

the result was a very successful one.



VALUABLE SECRETS.

3rd 11/08

No. I. *A productive composition to encrease vegetation most wonderfully.*

TAKE of cow, goat, sheep, hog, pidgeon, and human dungs: each a pound; nitre, the same quantity: dissolve them in three gallons of soft water, and let it stand two or three days, till the whole is thoroughly mixed. Steep the seeds in this mixture, till they are well swelled; then take them out, and shake them about in a box with some flowers of sulphur, so that the sulphur may stick round all the seeds. Every grain of corn so prepared produces seven or eight stalks, and every stalk at least fifty full grains; the effect is as great on other vegetables. Grain thus prepared starts sooner, and birds will not touch it.

No. II.

No. II. *To prevent blights on wall trees.*

Place rodded hurdles before them, leaning against the top of the wall, and sloping downwards. These will effectually break the force of the wind, so that a plentiful bloom will set with certainty. These rodded hurdles, if fixed to posts stuck in proper places, will keep a moderate frost out of the borders, and protect tender crops.

No. III. *To have a great number of young vines from one small branch.*

Cut the buds out with a small bit of the wood at bottom, as if they were intended for budding: plant these in a pot of fine earth, so that the top of the bud is just seen above the earth: plunge the pot in a hot-bed, and keep the earth always moist. Any very valuable sort may be wonderfully increased by this means, as every bud will strike, and make a fine plant. This would probably succeed with any fine fruit, or valuable tree.

No. IV. *To have fine cucumbers a fortnight after Christmas.*

Sow some of the very fine sorts, at the beginning of November, and manage them with care; or
take



take cuttings from fine plants in September: plant them separately in pots, and plunge them in a hot-bed; and when they are well rooted, plant them out properly on a back bed. These will often fruit before and at Christmas.

The best cucumber ever known in this country, is the *Ballafore*, which gives fruit of amazing size, and exquisite flavour.

No. V. *To have marrowfat peas in plenty at Christmas.*

A person known to the author, discovered this by accident. Peas had been sown for a small late crop, about the beginning of June; and when they began to shew their blossom buds, some sheep broke into the garden, and ate them all clean to the ground. They afterwards sprung up afresh most vigorously, and bloomed so late as to give above half a bushel of very fine peas, which were dressed on the Christmas Day. Art might imitate this, by cutting them down at the proper time. The season was mild, and the garden a warm sheltered one; severe frost seldom sets in before Christmas, and therefore this is seldom likely to fail.

No. VI.

No. VI. *To have twice as many peas from a summer crop as is common.*

Sow them in trenches four inches deep, and when they are advanced to an inch above the top of the trench, earth them up on both sides; afterwards, when they are six inches high, earth them up again, with a hoe on both sides, before you stick them. As soon as the bloom is off, cover them with nets, which is to keep off the birds who usually steal half a crop.

No. VII. *To have geese (either early, or at Michaelmas) of a very superior flavour.*

Fatten them with bean meal made into pellets.

No. VIII. *A way to make pork, or bacon, of an UNUSUALLY FINE FLAVOUR, and also at a much smaller expence in fattening.*

Give the pigs a moderate meal of scalded horse-beans, three or four times a day, and let there stand by them plenty of water, whitened with barley meal, to the thickness of water gruel. It will answer well to boil this, so as to keep the meal suspended. They must not have too many beans at once: a few, and often, will be well digested; the quantity must be determined by the size of the pig.

pig. One bushel of beans so used, will do as much service as four bushels of peas in the usual way; by which a great saving is made, and the meat will be exquisitely fine. It is unnecessary to add, that they must be kept very clean, have plenty of straw, and be put up two or more together, so that they may be perfectly contented and lazy.

No. IX. *To enable ewes to suckle their lambs well, when the common provision is cut off, or not to be had.*

Give them potatoes boiled with a little salt in the water; they will eat them with avidity, and thrive well upon them. Besides this, they may have good hay cut into chaff, and mixed with bran. The fineness of the lambs will pay for this feeding. Sheep or lambs may be fattened on potatoes given thus, or on refuse carrots. They will eat the hay perfectly clean out of the troughs, without wasting any.

No. X. *To make hens lay all the winter.*

Gather nettle-tops when going to seed, dry them, and lay them by for use; mix some of this with a little broken hempseed, and pollard, in barley meal; give them two or three pellets daily, throughout the autumn.

No. XI. *To preserve fruit in full perfection
all the winter.*

Mix a pound of powdered saltpetre, with two pounds of armenian bole, and four pounds of common sand, perfectly dried; let them be well mixed. Then gather the fruit on a dry day, and before it is quite ripe; handle the stalk only. Lay them regularly in a large wide mouthed glass vessel, with paper well dried between every layer; then cover the top with an oiled paper, or bladder tied on close; set this vessel in a box, and fill the box all round, and below and above it four inches thick, with the above preparation; cover the box, and set it by in a cool dry place, and the fruit will appear, when taken out, as if just gathered in the prime season. This will do equally well for any fine vegetables; as peas, french beans, cucumbers, &c. &c. Gooseberries preserved this way, are not to be distinguished in pastry from those gathered in the spring, and used immediately.

Fruit, vegetables, or flowers, may be preserved, if put into vessels well covered, and packed in snow or powdered ice. The latter may be had in the summer from ice-houses.



No. XII. *To raise asparagus so large that they shall be all from two to three inches in circumference.*

Make a compost, as follows. Take rotten horse dung, sludge from a pond, and sharp sand, of each four loads; peat mould, or mould taken from under an old wood pile, or the paring of the surface of the ground in a wood, and light loam, of each two loads; let these be spread in strata, one on the other, so as that in turning, they may be well mixed. For this purpose, let the heap be turned three or four, or perhaps half a dozen times; then mark out the borders, and dig them into trenches, two feet and a half deep; fill these trenches with the compost. This may be done before Christmas. Then in open weather, in the February following, put in the plants half a yard asunder every way, spreading the roots horizontally all round. These plants may be either those of two years old, or those which are fit for immediate produce, both of which may be had at the nurseries; but a much better way, is to raise them from seed, and to get that seed from Gravesend; let that seed be sown in March, on a bed of good light earth, by putting the seeds in singly, eight inches asunder; and neither growing any other crops, (as is the custom) nor suffering a weed upon

upon the bed, during the whole summer. These plants will be as large in the first year, as others raised in the common way, with onions or other crops upon the beds, are in two; and at two years old, may be removed with great care, into beds of compost, prepared as above.

The produce so managed, will be most of them as thick as a walking stick, and every hundred of them will afford more edible substance, than five hundred of the common size, besides possessing a vastly superior flavour.

The Gravesend seed is above recommended in preference to other, on account of the superior care taken there; but the newly introduced *Catalonian asparagus* seed, is a sort infinitely surpassing all others, both in size, flavour, and quick growth. This is sold only where this book is purchased,

No. XIII. *To have such crops of onions, as are rarely seen in this country, and nearly as large as the Spanish.*

Chuse a sheltered spot, and sow some Spanish, or white Portugal seed, in August; keep the bed watered to fetch them up soon; about Michaelmas, sift some sawdust, a quarter of an inch thick all over the bed. If the frost should be very intense in the following winter, contrive some way

to shelter them. In the beginning of February, dig some beds for them, rake them fine, and then transplant the onions into these beds, at six inches asunder every way; and plant them an inch deep, or more; suffer not a weed upon the beds, and when they have been there about two months, sift some light mould, or sand, nearly an inch thick on the beds. In two months more, hoe up the earth round the roots, as cabbages are hoed; keep them well watered, and always moist, during the whole summer, till August: when the watering may be left off, and the tops beaten down. At the end of this month take them up.

They will be as delicately white, as mild, and nearly as large as the Spanish; they may be sown in February, and transplanted as late as the beginning of April, but the crops, though very fine, will not be equal to the former.

The *New Lisbon* onion, obtained by the author of this, from an ingenious person there, is indisputably the most valuable sort known, both for beauty, whiteness, mildness, flavour, and abundant produce; and does not require to be sown sooner than February, to bring its very best crop, but will give good crops if sown later, even in April, and May, without being transplanted.

No. XIV. *To prevent birds from taking away seeds from a new sown bed.*

Nothing is a more common vexation to the gardener than this, and no one of the methods hitherto generally used, have been found *certainly* effectual. Radishes, cabbages, cauliflowers, brocoli, &c. often have this disappointment attending them, so that the Gardener is obliged to sow a second time, by which, the early season is lost, and the crop comes later than was wanted. The following method has never been found to fail.

Put 80, or 100 drops of tincture of assafetida, (which is to be had at any Chymists) into a glass of water; add two table spoons full of juice of elder leaves, or the leaves of loveapple; mix it well together, and steep the seeds therein, for five or six hours, till they are very much swelled; take them out, and let them drain till nothing runs from them. Then put a teaspoonful of flowers of sulphur, and as much powdered lime, together into a box, and put the seeds to them; shake them well about, till the seeds are coated with the powders; they may then be sown, and not a bird will touch a single seed.

The juice of elder, or love apple leaves, is obtained with very little trouble, by cutting them small, then bruising them, and then squeezing them in a bit of cloth.

No. XV.

No. XV. *To secure a seedbed from the ravages of birds, after the seeds have sprouted.*

Birds are dreadful destroyers of radishes, and some other plants, particularly all of the cabbage or kale tribe, after they have sprouted perhaps an inch high; and the surest method which a gentleman can take, in this respect, that his Gardener and himself shall not be so disappointed, is the following.

Make frames of deal, in width according to the breadth of the borders, whether three, four, or five feet, and in length according to pleasure; let the depth be eight or nine inches. These are to be covered with wire work, like the screens which the Bricklayers use for sifting their lime; one of these laid on the seed bed, will protect it with *certainty*, till the plants are past danger. If the boards are as deep as above-mentioned, so that a bird cannot reach to the bottom, the wire work need not be very close. The expence then, will not be very great, and if painted, they will keep for many years. If a Gardener is furnished with a few of these, he will scarce ever be disappointed of his crops; and in this case, the above mentioned methods of preparing the seeds will be unnecessary.

No. XVI. *To prevent slugs, or snails, from destroying a crop, or any favourite plants in a garden.*

It has been common to furround the plant, or the border, with lime; but this soon loses its effect, especially if there comes rain: but a certain preventative is, to spread coarsely powdered glass, an inch broad, and *all round* the border, or plant. This they never can get over, and therefore all that might come from a distance, will be guarded against. It will be proper to look over the border, for two or three evenings after this is done, that if any slugs were under the earth, within the circle of the glass, they may be taken and destroyed. If the bed be dry, water it; and about an hour after dark, go with a lantern and look over it. Thus it will be soon freed, and no others can come into it.

No. XVII. *To prevent peas, or beans when planted, from being destroyed, or carried away by mice.*

This is an evil that continually happens, in so much that the rows are rendered very imperfect, and sometimes almost destroyed. To prevent it,

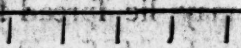
Let the peas, or beans, before they are planted, be steeped in stale chamberlye, and when they have

have been drained almost dry, put them into a pan, and pour upon them, oil of turpentine, as much as will cover them: Let them lie for an hour or two, then take them out, and put the oil of turpentine back into a bottle, to be kept for future use. They may lie spread separately, till their outer skins are dry, before they are planted. No mouse, or other vermin, will come near them.

No. XVIII. *To contrive walls for fruit, so as to have as much of the finest quality from three trees, as is usually had from ten, and to ensure a certain crop.*

By this way, a small piece of ground will produce a prodigious quantity of fruit. It is the nature of most trees to bear abundantly, but one accident or another, or rather a succession of them, usually deprive us of the greatest quantity. For want of a little care, it often happens, that most of the bloom is cut off. Of what does for a great deal in a dry summer, falls away. Of the remainder the vermin will spoil a considerable share, and lastly, it often happens, that when the little that is left, is arrived at full perfection, it is stolen. It will all disappear in a night, and bring a sudden and great disappointment.

To obviate all these evils, and be *sure* of a proper quantity, observe the following directions.

Suppose you have a southerly wall, lay out a border under it ten feet wide; then at every ten or twelve feet distance, build transverse walls, in this manner  across the ten foot

border, of the same height as the other wall. Here you may plant three trees in each division, viz.

a peach, nectarine, &c. against the south wall;

and proper kinds of apricots, plumbs, pears, or cherries, against the sides of the transverse walls:

So there will be three trees in each division. Let

there be wooden frame work, firmly fixed to the top, from one transverse wall to the other, with

wooden rails, or rather some made of strong iron wire, put at six inches asunder with which an

entire top is made to this division. There must

be a front of the same kind, with a door in the

middle. By this means, the whole three trees

are secured, being inclosed every way by the wire,

and therefore cannot be robbed, if the gardener

locks them up at night. A gentleman intending to

build fruit walls for any number of trees, may do

it this way, at as little expence, as in the common

manner: The difference will be, that a wall for

thirty trees, this way, must be only as long as for

ten on a straight wall. And gentlemen who have

their walls already, may build the transverse ad-

ditions

ditions for one division, if that answers their expectation, (as no doubt it must) they may easily add another, and another, as they please. The walls being thus ready, let us consider the management of the trees, and first, to secure the bloom, it is obvious that nothing is easier, than for the gardener, at the time of a blight, to lay a mat, or a little straw, thinly on the top; or if necessary, to hang up a mat in front, or a little fern may be stuck in the railing. This will secure the setting of the bloom with *certainty*. After it is set and grown to the size of a horsebean, let him look over the trees, and thin them properly.

The next care is to prevent their falling off in a very dry summer, which is the easiest thing in the world. Hoe up the earth round the stem of each tree, and form it into a basin, that will hold a gallon or two of water; put that quantity to each tree, every two or three days, or as often as the ground is found to be dry, at an inch or two deep. To keep the vermin from the trees, take a hair line for each tree, put it round the stem, and then carry it all round the extremities of the tree, nailing it against the wall. This if it entirely surrounds the tree, will keep off all creeping vermin; for as the points of the hair are sharp, they can none of them crawl over the line. These lines will last many years. You have at length, no enemy left

to fear but wasps, and I know not how with certainty to prevent their invasion. By these means, the quantity of fruit will be very great, and when advanced to maturity, cannot be stolen, if the Gardener is careful, unless he steals them himself, which, I believe, is not seldom the case.

It may be thought that these transverse walls will keep off the sun's rays: but that is a mistake, for as the walls are low, most likely not above seven or eight feet high, the sun will shine over them, till he is very near setting, and the front and top being made only of large wire, occasions no interruption.

No. XIX. *To determine precisely, the most advantageous distance, at which any plants may stand, so as to obtain the greatest crop possible from any quantity of ground.*

For want of due attention to this, people are often losers; if the plants are set very distant, part of the ground is wasted, or what is worse, filled with interweaving weeds; if they are set too near, they are stinted for want of nourishment. To determine this, scatter a few seeds, and mark three or four of the finest plants after they are up; let neither weeds nor any thing else grow near them: and when they are at their full maturity, is the time
for

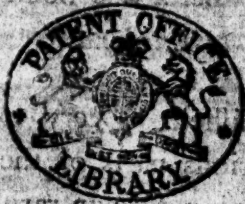
for observation. If it be a plant that forms a large head, as cabbages, brucoli, &c. or which spreads its leaves wide upon the ground, as artichokes, &c. measure the top of the plant as it stands, from the extremity on one side, to that of the other; this will be a proper distance to set them at. If it be a tap rooted kind, as carrots, parsnips, &c. the same rule will hold good; let one grow by itself, and measure the width of its expansion across the top. If it be a fibrous rooted plant, which strikes its fibres horizontally under the surface, as a great many do, take it up carefully, so as not to break the fibres; then shake the earth from them, and measure the length of the roots; twice that length, is the proper distance to plant them at, because the fibres extend on every side to that distance. Wheat and barley are of this kind, and an acre of ground so planted, will bring an abundant crop, from a very small quantity of seed, and the crop so produced, will be fit for the finest purposes.

No. XX. *To plant corn so as to make a vast saving in seed and labour, and bring an abundant crop, of the very finest quality.*

This cannot easily be done upon a very large scale for want of hands, but it may be done to advantage, upon a few acres; and a person who possesses

possesses but a few, may make very considerable gain thereby. Directions for one acre, will give a rule for more. Let a pole of ground be well dug, and raked fine, as if it were garden ground, in August; then scatter half a peck of good seed corn, and rake it well in; water the ground, and lay a few bushes to prevent the birds from stealing part of it. Let this seed-bed stand till spring: In February finish getting the acre of ground ready, and let it be then ploughed. Towards the end of the month, dig up the plants in the seed-bed, and let them be transplanted into this ground, at about nine inches asunder every way, if the ground be rich; and at six inches, if it be not so. A man who has been used to work for the Gardeners, in planting cabbages, &c. would run over the acre presently; he might be attended by a boy, or girl, to carry and supply him with plants. This corn so planted, will spread, and tiller in a surprising manner: and send up a much greater number of fine ears, than in the common way; and the plants, having gained a considerable growth, and being transplanted into fresh ploughed ground, will immediately strike new roots, and cover the ground entirely, before the weeds can vegetate and rise: so that the crop will be very clean. Wheat so managed, will bring at least five quarters

ters an acre, and other corn in proportion. The
expencc of weeding is entirely saved, and in many
places, one ploughing may be saved, besides the
great saving in seed. The crop also being of the
finest kind possible, will bear the very highest
price.



FINIS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The *Bullafone Cucumber, Catalonian Asparagus, and New Lisbon Onion*, mentioned in this tract, are all imported only by the Author, and sold by his appointment, where this book was purchased, and no where else in England.

Having established a very extensive correspondence, in various parts of the world, for the purpose of obtaining foreign rarities, he has, for several years past, introduced some articles to public notice, which have gained great and general approbation from the nobility and gentry of these three kingdoms.

His botanical friends abroad, being engaged to look out for whatever is curious, he apprehends it to be probable, that he may still have more valuable novelties, either seeds or plants, transmitted to him, as often as such are found.

The ANNUAL CATALOGUE, for 1795, of valuable and newly introduced Seeds, and Curiosities, sold by his appointment, at MRS. PRITCHETTS, No. 374, Oxford-Street, will be speedily published, and delivered gratis.

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